

## Our Methodology

The **Influence Index** uses data and insight to score each Member of the European Parliament (MEP) on their political and social influence across a range of policy areas.

The Index is not an assessment of MEPs' work-ethic or loyalty to their constituents. 'Influence' indicates the level of power the MEP currently wields. Influential MEPs might be shaping policies in a different way to what they promised during the electoral campaign. MEPs at the beginning of their career may still be building their network, or their parties might be isolated because their policy positions are too far from the mainstream to enable them to find allies.

The Index is a data-driven analysis of influence. The rankings represent empirical measures and are not an endorsement of the MEPs or their positions.

### How are MEPs scored?

#### Political Influence

MEPs' political influence is based on their concrete actions as opposed to subjective perceptions from the public or peers. MEPs are rated on their influence on EU policies and processes, regardless of their domestic profile. The influence score is based on:

- **Leadership:** Appointments to positions of influence in the European Parliament or the political groups. We call this "diffuse influence" where, unlike rapporteurs who have "concentrated influence" over specific dossiers, political leaders influence all dossiers through their participation in the most important decision-making bodies of the Parliament (Conference of Presidents, Conference of Committee Chairs, etc.).
- **Legislative power:** The MEP's ability to influence legislation, by becoming a rapporteur, shadow rapporteur or opinion rapporteur. We assign more points to rapporteur positions under Ordinary Legislative Procedure compared to non-legislative reports.
- **Performance:** MEPs' participation in the voting sessions, the extent to which they vote along with their political groups, and the extent to which they are on the majority side.
- **Network:** The strength of the MEP's network is judged based on the time they spend in Brussels, their seniority, and experience. Domestic ties are also taken into account: MEPs whose parties are in government are likely to get preferential access to information from their ministries, which provide them with an edge in inter-institutional relations.

These criteria and their weightings were evaluated by experts on EU affairs.

#### Social Influence

Social influence is a measure of MEPs' ability to reach audiences, shape the public conversation, and build a community of support with their ideas. Scores are calculated using Twitter data from the period June 2019 – June 2020 and are based on the *reach* and *relevance* of the MEP's Twitter activity.

##### Reach

- The number of people following the MEP
- The number of engagements (retweets and likes) on policy-relevant posts

### **Relevance**

- The number of policy-relevant posts published
- The number of times the MEP is mentioned by other MEPs in policy-relevant posts

Policy-relevant posts are Tweets where one or more keywords relating to the policy area appear in any of the 24 official EU languages.

### **What are the policy areas?**

- Health
- A European Green Deal
- A Europe fit for the digital age
- An economy that works for people
- A stronger Europe in the world
- Promoting our European way of life
- A new push for European democracy

These are based on the six priorities of the European Commission under Ursula Von der Leyen's presidency, with health included as an additional key policy area.

An assessment of MEPs' influence across all policy areas will also be published.